

## James Hardy Dillard II '59

### *Olde Guarde Distinguished Service Award Nomination*

April 27, 2025

*By Carol Crute Wampler '70*

It was an honor — and a challenge — to nominate James Hardy Dillard II '59 for W&M's Olde Guarde Distinguished Service Award. **An honor** because Jim has lived such an exemplary life of service and achievement. **A challenge** because Jim's accomplishments are so numerous that it took six of us to compile his nomination information! In brief summary ...

As an **educator**, Jim served as a teacher and administrator in Fairfax County Public Schools for many decades. As a **legislator**, he served as a highly influential delegate in the Virginia General Assembly for 32 years. As a **W&M supporter**, he has dedicated himself to this college since 1953 — or approximately 72 years (which is as long as our most recent Olde Guarde inductees have been alive). In each of these areas — as an educator, legislator, and W&M supporter — he made, and continues to make, significant contributions.

And perhaps the overriding theme of Jim's contributions is **education**.

Certainly, as a classroom teacher, social studies department chairman, and administrator, Jim directly touched the lives of many students. But as an influential legislator in the Virginia General Assembly, he also indirectly affected the lives of countless students across the Commonwealth. As chairman of several powerful committees and subcommittees, as well as a frequent budget conferee and member of the Virginia Board of Education, Jim indirectly touched the lives of generations of students by protecting sound educational policies and adequate funding. His name is associated with important policies related to the Standards of Quality, civics education, English as a second language, guidance counselors in elementary schools, and the study of foreign policy in high schools. During his long tenure as a delegate, Jim was widely recognized as the General Assembly's leading advocate for public education.

Jim is also recognized as a leader in natural-resource advocacy at the General Assembly. It could be argued, however, that even his environmental advocacy has an educational component. For example, Jim sponsored Virginia's park bond issue in 2002 that provided funds to create five new state parks. And some of us have worked since 2020 under Jim's chairmanship in advocating for adequate funding for Virginia's state parks. Our committee members have come to understand that an important function of our state parks is to educate all of us about the value and importance of protecting our state's outdoor resources.

But neither his success as a legislator nor as an educator can surpass Jim's love of William & Mary that, as Jim testifies, changed his life. W&M Professor Dr. Charles Foster inspired Jim to become a government teacher and later a state legislator. Jim's love of W&M also inspired him to serve on the Board of Visitors and W&M Alumni Association Board of Directors. He is an active member of the Cypher Society. Jim and his cousin, David Dillard, have collaborated in establishing awards and scholarships for W&M students — in part to honor their ancestor, Dr. James Hardy Dillard, who was rector of W&M from 1918 to 1940. Most notably, Jim and his wife, Joyce Butt Dillard '58, attend ALL the W&M home football games! If something is going on at W&M, Joyce and Jim are bound to be here.

If asked the secret to his success, Jim would undoubtedly say it is his lovely and intelligent life's partner — his beloved wife, Joyce.

Well, the rest of us don't have Joyce, but we can still do our best to **follow Jim's example**: That is ...

- We can always love the college that gave each of us so much.
- And we can continue to serve — serve our families, our communities, our state and our country — as best we can, for just as long as we are blessed with life on this earth.

**Like Jim, we must FORGET words like “retirement” and “old age” — because he has PROVED that our ability to make a difference can transcend these tired and self-limiting concepts.**

Thank you, Jim, for your leadership, and for being a beloved role model to all who know you.

Congratulations and appreciation from your nominators!

(Represented by Carol Crute Wampler, W&M Class of 1970)